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PRRC emerging trends

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Return To Religion Found On College Campuses Of America

PRINCETON, N.J. – The *Newsweek On Campus* Poll reveals a return to religion on the college campuses of America:

– The percentage of the nation's college students who say religion is very important in their lives has increased from 39% in 1975 and 1979 Gallup Polls to 50% in the current survey.

– Churchgoing has increased, with 39% of students saying they attend every week, compared to 34% in 1975. The current figure is virtually the same as the proportion of the total adult (18 and older) population who attend in a typical week (40%), as determined in the latest Gallup Poll audit of church attendance.

– The proportion of college youth today who say their religious commitment has become stronger since they have been in college is twice the proportion who say it has become weaker, 35% to 16%.

An article based on the survey, conducted by The Gallup Organization and published in the May issue of *Newsweek On Campus*, ascribes the upturn in religion to students finding a sense of security in traditional faiths in the face of new personal challenges and uncertain times. The article notes that the principal beneficiaries of the renewed religious quest have been fundamentalist or evangelical Christian groups.

The survey also shows:

– 93% of students saying there is "no chance" they would join a religious cult, and 85% believing the cults are dangerous to their members. But only one student in 10 thinks the cults seriously threaten mainstream religion.

– 68% of students are members of a church or synagogue, matching the national adult percentage, (67%), as determined by the latest Gallup Poll audit of church membership.

– 83% say religious beliefs are very or somewhat important in making an educated person a better family member, while the comparable percentages are 80% in terms of making an educated person treat people more fairly in daily life, 63% in helping an educated person make career decisions, and 59% in helping an educated person get ahead in his or her career.

– Nine in 10 (91%) say they believe in God or a universal spirit (compared to 89% recorded in a 1975 Gallup audit of the opinion of college students).

– 47% give their religious preference as Protestant, 32% as Roman Catholic, 5% as Jewish, 1% say Eastern Orthodox while 6% cite other religious faiths or organizations and 9% say they have no religious preference. The current figures for the adult population as a whole (based on Gallup Poll surveys): Protestants – 57%, Catholics – 29%, Jews – 2%, Eastern Orthodox – 1%, other – 3%, and none – 8%.

Following are the questions and findings. Note that in some tables the figures do not add to 100%, due to exclusion of the "no opinion" category.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

How important to you are your religious beliefs?

Very important	50%
Fairly important	33
Not too important	11
Not at all important	3
No religious beliefs	3

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

How often do you attend religious services?

Every week	39%
About once a month	19
A few times a year	21
Almost never	20

CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

Since you have been in college, has your religious commitment become. . .

Much stronger	15%
Little stronger	20
Little weaker	11
Much weaker	5
No change	48

ATTITUDES TOWARD 'CULTS'

In recent years, what are often called religious cult groups, for example, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, have grown in membership among young people. Is there a chance that you might join such a group?

Good chance	*
Some chance	1%
Very little chance	5
No chance	93

*less than 1 percent

Do you think that religious cult groups are. . .

Very dangerous to members	41%
Somewhat dangerous	44
Not very dangerous	7
Not at all dangerous	4

How much of a threat do you think religious cult groups pose to organized mainstream religions? Would you say they are. . .

A great threat	10%
Somewhat of a threat	39
Little threat at all	47

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

Are you a member of a church or synagogue?

	Yes	No
All students	68%	32%
18 or younger	82	18
19	74	26
20-21	70	30
22 or older	54	46

PLACE OF MEMBERSHIP

Do you belong to a church or synagogue at home, at college or both at home and at college? (asked of members)

At home	48%
At college	1
Both at home and college	19
	68%

INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Do you belong to or participate in the activities of a college organization associated with a religious denomination, such as Newman, Hillel, or Wesley?

Yes	8%
No	92

IMPORTANCE OF BELIEFS ON ASPECTS OF LIFE

Rate the importance of religious beliefs on various aspects of the life of an educated person.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
	%	%	%	%
Making an educated person a better family member	44	39	8	7
Making an educated person treat people more fairly in daily life	48	32	10	8
Helping an educated person make decisions in his or her career	29	34	22	13
Helping an educated person get ahead in his or her career	25	34	23	16

BELIEF IN GOD

Do you believe in God or a universal spirit?

Yes	91%
No	5
Not sure	4
	100%

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

What is your religious preference?

	Students	All Adults
Protestant	47%	57%
Roman Catholic	32	29
Jewish	5	2
Eastern Orthodox	1	1
Other	6	3
No religion	9	8

(THE NEWSWEEK ON CAMPUS POLL, Copyright 1983, NEWSWEEK, INC.)

Interesting Differences Seen In Belief Patterns In Global Survey

In many of the nations covered in the Gallup International survey, *Human Needs and Satisfactions*, women are found to be more religious than men, and older people more so than younger adults.

But an interesting exception to this pattern is found among the people of Sub-Sahara Africa, where men are slightly more likely than women to say religion is very important in their lives, and young adults (under 30) are as religious as persons of middle age.

In the U.S., the proportion of women who say religion is very important is 19 percentage points higher than among men. In Latin America, the difference is 16 points, while in Europe, it is 14 points. In Africa, on the other hand, men are four percentage points more likely than women to say that religion is very important in their lives.

The following tables give the full details for the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Africa. Although the interviewing was conducted in the mid-70s (by Gallup-affiliated organizations in 60 nations), more recent surveys reveal similar patterns by demographic groups.

	RELIGION IN OWN LIFE	BELIEVE IN		
	Very important	Life after death	Existence of God	God observes and rewards/ punishes
UNITED STATES				
Men	47%	65%	92%	65%
Women	66	73	96	72
Under 30 years	45	64	92	67
30-49 years	58	71	94	69
50 & older	63	71	96	69
Primary education	70	75	96	79
Secondary education	58	70	96	76
Advanced education	49	66	91	56
White collar	54	77	92	64
Blue collar	47	64	94	69
Lower income	62	69	93	73
Middle income	53	72	95	70
Upper income	49	65	94	56
EUROPE				
Men	19	35	73	36
Women	33	52	83	50
Under 30 years	17	39	71	34
30-49 years	26	43	78	42
50 & older	34	47	84	51
Primary education	30	44	82	52
Secondary education	23	42	74	39
Advanced education	24	46	76	31
White collar	22	41	74	34
Blue collar	18	35	75	37
Lower income	29	45	81	48
Middle income	17	40	76	35
Upper income	23	36	69	30

	RELIGION IN OWN LIFE	BELIEVE IN		
	Very important	Life after death	Existence of God	God observes and rewards/ punishes
LATIN AMERICA				
Men	53%	45%	93%	70%
Women	69	53	98	85
Under 30 years	53	41	93	74
30-49 years	59	44	97	77
50 & older	76	69	95	83
Primary education	65	51	97	84
Secondary education	46	38	94	55
Advanced education	52	37	90	42
White collar	36	32	92	56
Blue collar	62	59	96	80
Lower income	73	54	97	86
Middle income	60	50	97	68
Upper income	36	37	93	68
AFRICA				
Men	75	67	95	81
Women	71	71	96	89
Under 30 years	68	59	93	82
30-49 years	66	73	95	86
50 & older	76	68	97	78
Primary education	76	71	96	87
Secondary education	46	54	89	80
Advanced education	42	48	81	61
White collar	77	78	91	88
Blue collar	65	70	97	89
Lower income	80	70	95	86
Middle income	69	88	97	85
Upper income	83	53	91	87

Older Adults Seen As An Active, Religious Segment Of Society

Recent Gallup survey results dispel the notion sometimes held that the 65-and-older group in the population are an inactive and disinterested segment of society.

For example 36% of these older Americans – comprising about one-fifth of the adult population – are involved in charitable activities compared to 31% of younger (under 65) adults. In addition, the proportion in this older group belonging to voluntary organizations (33%) is statistically as high as it is among the younger group (34%).

The over-65 group are also more likely to have given money to charity (71% have done so) than persons under this age (66%).

Other interesting comparisons in the attitudes and behavior of older and younger adults are:

- Older persons (79%) are far more likely than younger people (66%) to be members of a church or synagogue, to attend church in a typical week (50% against 38%) and to say religion is very important in their lives (50% do so, compared to 38% among those younger than 65).

- Older persons are as likely as younger to exercise regularly, with 48% of the 65-and-older group saying they perform some form of daily exercise, compared to 47% among the under-65 group.

- Senior citizens are more fearful of walking in their neighborhoods at night (54% compared to 43% of their younger counterparts), but they are no more likely to be fearful of walking in their communities during the daylight hours. And they are as apt as persons under 65 to feel secure in their homes.

- Persons over 65 are only about half as likely as younger adults to have been victims of assaults or burglaries during the 12-month period surveyed. The figures are 15% and 27%, respectively.

- Older persons have a better record of registering to vote (83% compared to 69%) and are far more likely to say they always vote in national elections – 57% compared to 37%.

- The GOP can claim a greater proportion of the over-65 group than the younger segment, as seen in the table:

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

	65 & older	Under 65
Republican	30%	23%
Democrat	52	45
Independent	18	32
	100%	100%

- The older group tends more to a conservative political philosophy than do persons under 65, as seen below:

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

	65 & older	Under 65
Right	35%	32%
Center	41	37
Left	12	21
No opinion	12	10
	100%	100%

- The older group are more likely than their younger counterparts to espouse traditional values, although the differences are not great in the case of some of the values tested. In addition, older people are less likely to favor greater social acceptance of sexual freedom and marijuana use, as seen below.

Following are the percentages of persons in the two age groups saying they would welcome each of these changes:

ACCEPTANCE OF SOCIAL CHANGES

	65 & older	Under 65
Religious beliefs playing a greater role in people's lives	88%	74%
More respect for authority	94	88
Less emphasis on working hard	23	29
Less emphasis on money	66	72
More emphasis on traditional family ties	95	92
More acceptance of sexual freedom	7	28
More acceptance of marijuana use	1	16

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- Any view that older persons, because of age-related health and other problems, are less content than the rest of the adult population is dispelled by results showing that 55% of the 65-and-older group say they are very happy compared to 49% of younger adults.
- Finally, the 65-and-older group is slightly more satisfied than the younger group with the way things are going in their personal lives, and hold similiar views about the way things are going in the nation, as seen below:

SATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL LIFE

	65 & older	Under 65
Satisfied	78%	74%
Dissatisfied	20	24
No opinion	2	2
	100%	100%

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE IN U.S.

	65 & older	Under 65
Satisfied	24%	23%
Dissatisfied	73	72
No opinion	3	5
	100%	100%

The findings are based on recent in-person surveys, each with 1,500 or more adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation.

For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

MORE TODAY ACCEPT INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

One of the most interesting chapters in the social history of America has been the decline in racial and religious prejudices. Compelling evidence that Americans are becoming more tolerant is found in the changes in the public's attitudes on interracial and interfaith marriages during the last decade and a half.

Since 1968 the proportion of Americans who say they approve of marriage between whites and non-whites has grown from 20% to 43%, while those approving of marriage between Catholics and Protestants has increased from 63% to 79%. In the case of marriage between Jews and non-Jews, the percentage has risen from 59% in 1968 to 77% at present.

The proportion who approve of marriage between Catholics and Protestants has increased by 16 percentage points in the last 15 years, from 63% in 1968 to 79% now.

A similar pattern is found in attitudes toward marriage between Jews and non-Jews, with approval up 18 percentage points.

Among the small number of Jews in the sample, opinion closely matches that of non-Jews.

EDUCATION A KEY FACTOR

One of the key factors in the growth of racial and religious tolerance has been the increase in college training. The proportion of the population with at least some college education has more than tripled since the Gallup Poll was founded in 1935. College-educated persons in every survey have been more tolerant than those without a college background.

CATHOLICS FOUND MORE TOLERANT

Interestingly, Catholics are more accepting than Protestants of interfaith and interracial marriages, as seen in the following tables:

MARRIAGE BETWEEN PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS

	Protestants %	Catholics %
Approve	74	89
Disapprove	13	6
No opinion	13	5

MARRIAGE BETWEEN JEWS AND NON-JEWS

	Protestants %	Catholics %
Approve	73	86
Disapprove	12	6
No opinion	15	8

MARRIAGE BETWEEN WHITES AND NON-WHITES

	Protestants %	Catholics %
Approve	38	47
Disapprove	57	46
No opinion	5	7

Views from South Africa

Does The Church Have Adequate Answers To Problems Of Today?

The church has very often been attacked for not recognizing the needs of our times, and for not adjusting and adapting to a changing social environment. How do South Africans feel about the role which the church is playing in South Africa and the function it fulfills?

It is quite obvious from the answers shown that the church does not have adequate answers to all the problems of our times. Only about half of the Whites concede that the church knows the right answers for the moral problems and needs of the individual or the problems of family life. Among Blacks and Asians the proportions are even lower. Among Whites, it is particularly the English-speaking section which criticizes the church for having lost touch with reality, whereas the Afrikaans-speaking Whites still to a larger extent recognize the authority of the church for moral problems of the individual, as well as problems of family life. The church is given more credit for looking after man's spiritual needs, but even so, quite a large proportion of all racial groups does not seem to be very satisfied with the performance of the church.

Following are the questions:

Generally speaking, do you think that your church is giving, in your country, adequate answers to. . .

A. *The moral problems and needs of the individual?*

B. *The problems of family life?*

C. *Man's spiritual needs?*

Excerpt from the Markinor South African Social Value Study – conducted in association with Gallup International among 600 Whites nationwide, 600 Blacks in metropolitan areas, 200 Coloureds in Cape Town and 200 Asians in Durban during October and November 1981.

DOES THE CHURCH HAVE ADEQUATE ANSWERS?

	Total	Whites		Blacks	Colou-reds	Asians
		Eng.	Afr.			
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The church has adquate answers to:						
• The moral problems and needs of the individual	57	48	64	52	61	22
• The problems of family life	58	46	67	43	72	25
• Man's spiritual needs	70	60	78	59	74	32

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